



Greater Brighton Economic Board

Annual Report 2020/21

April 2021

# Greater Brighton Economic Board Members 2020/21

## 7 Local Authorities

- Adur District Council
- Arun District Council
- Brighton & Hove City Council
- Crawley Borough Council
- Lewes District Council
- Mid Sussex District Council
- Worthing Borough Council

## 3 Business Partnerships

- Adur & Worthing Business Partnership
- Brighton & Hove Economic Partnership
- Coastal West Sussex Partnership

## 2 Universities

- University of Brighton
- University of Sussex

## Further Education

### College

- Greater Brighton Metropolitan College (GBMet)

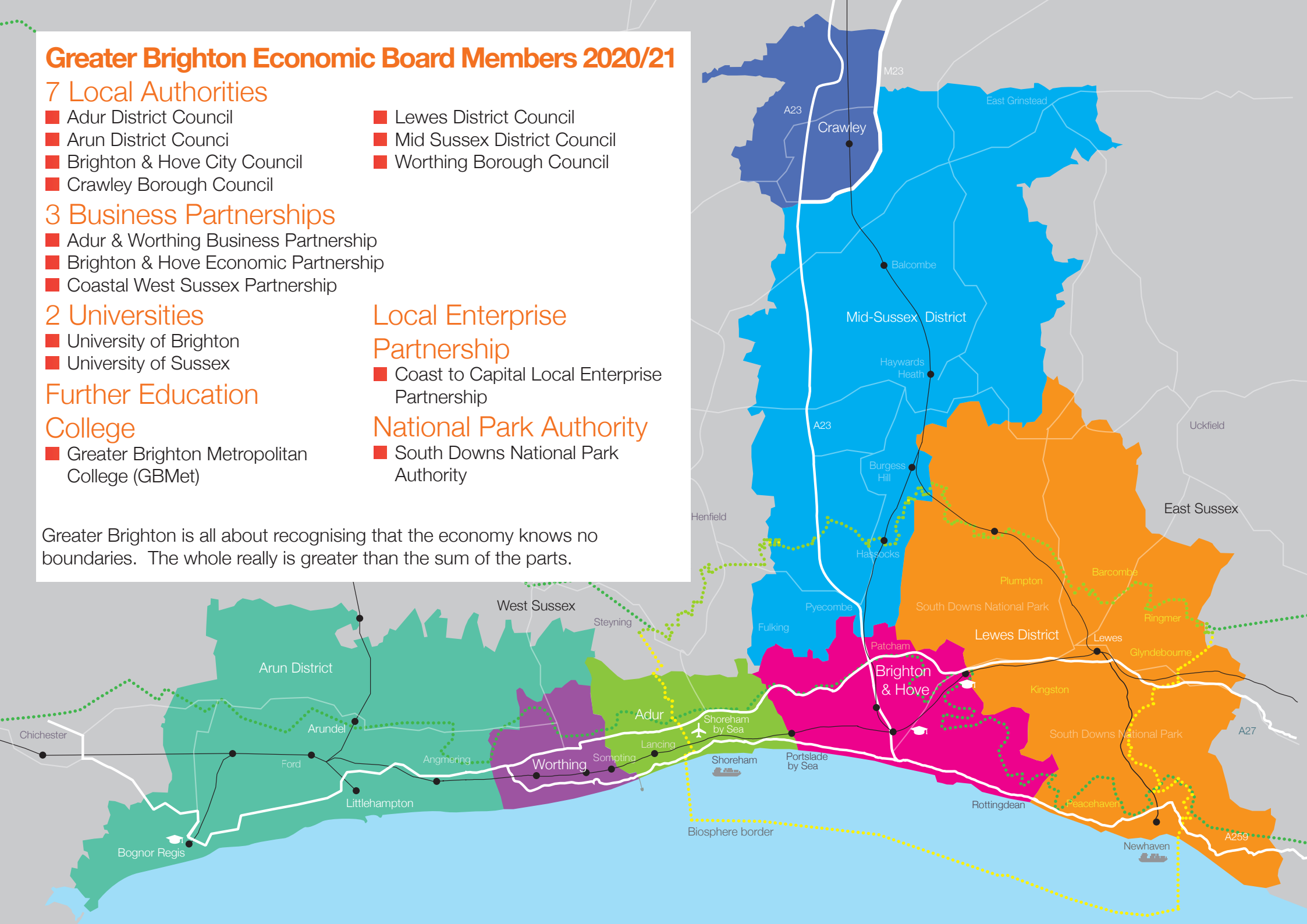
## Local Enterprise Partnership

- Coast to Capital Local Enterprise Partnership

## National Park Authority

- South Downs National Park Authority

Greater Brighton is all about recognising that the economy knows no boundaries. The whole really is greater than the sum of the parts.





# Response to COVID 19 – driving economic recovery

## Initial Response

In April 2020 it became clear that COVID-19 presented a global health and economic challenge the likes of which we had never experienced. The economic impact on the City Region would be significant; Gatwick Airport, the UK's second largest, was effectively closed as airlines were forced to ground their fleets. This impacted the circa 25,000 direct employees but also businesses and workers in the wider aviation industry and airport supply chain – many of which are based in Crawley. The City Region's strong cultural and visitor economy, and wider hospitality sector, particularly along the south coast, would also be severely impacted by the crisis.

Since the start of the pandemic, local authority partners have worked tirelessly and innovatively to continue delivering key services, and to offer critical support to businesses and residents through the crisis. Local authorities have administered over £200 million in business grants to over 20,000 eligible businesses, and over £6 million in discretionary grants.

In addition, to the Government schemes, Local Authorities have worked collaboratively with partners to provide innovative support packages to businesses. These include Mid Sussex working with the Community Services Team on a £300,000 Covid-19 Recovery Fund to support local businesses.

## Leading the Regional Recovery

Whilst the immediate response to the COVID-19 crisis was around maintaining services and supporting businesses and residents, attention quickly turned to looking ahead to how to restart and revive the economy. Economic recovery would need to be considered at a regional level and the Board was well-placed to lead on this.

Before informed decisions could be made around economic recovery there was need to understand the economic, social and health impacts of COVID-19 to the Greater Brighton region. External expertise was required to produce the COVID-19 Impact Assessment report in July.

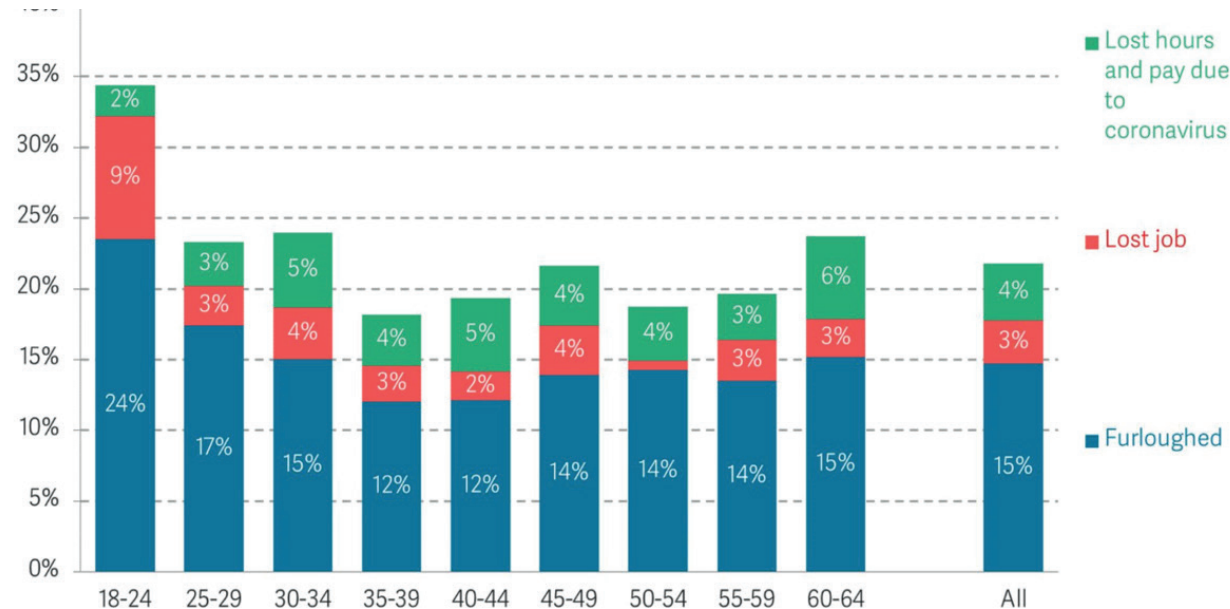
### Key findings from that report were;

- Estimates 11% reduction in Gross Value Added (GVA) in 2020
- The region's estimated year of recovery to pre-COVID GVA levels is 2028
- There will be lasting affects to the City Region's sectoral make up and productivity levels
- An estimated 7,700 businesses have had to temporarily close
- Just under 50% of all Greater Businesses have six months or less of cash reserves
- The young fared worst market with around a third of workers 18-24 having been furloughed or lost their jobs
- In terms of value, the greatest sectoral GVA losses will be in Manufacturing, Education and Wholesale & Retail
- On a proportional basis the greatest sectoral losses will be in Arts & Entertainment, Education, and Accommodation & Food Services

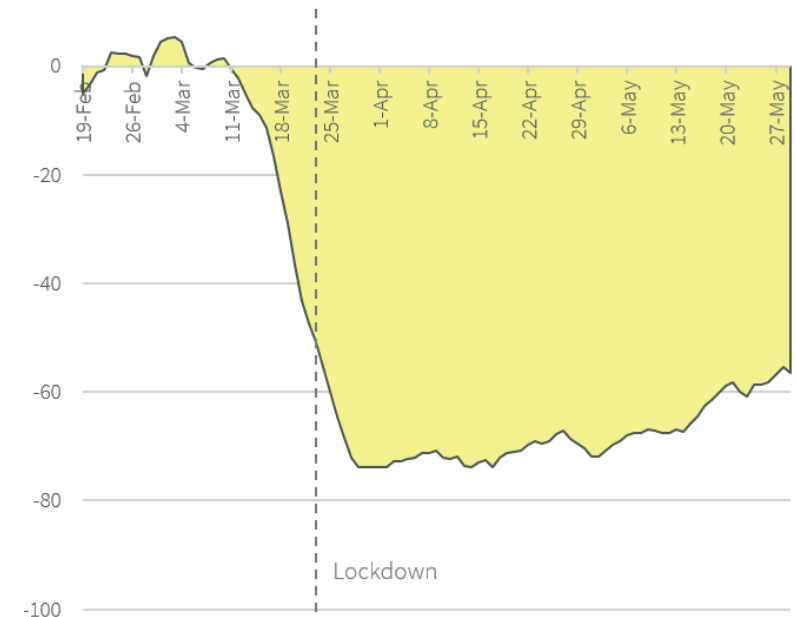
# COVID 19 impact

These charts are extracts from the [COVID-19 Impact Assessment Report](#) produced in July 2020. The first shows the impact on the workforce in terms of lost job, lost hours/pay and furlough, and it shows that the impact is greatest on those in the 18-24 age group. The

second graph displays the level of activity across the public transport network using Google mobility statistics. The mobility data shows that movement was down by around 75% during the first lockdown in the spring of 2020



Source: Hatch analysis of YouGov data



Source: Google Mobility data, Hatch analysis

# Response to COVID 19 – driving the Economic recovery

## Leading the Regional Recovery

Whilst many of the headline figures for employment and output were broadly in line with other parts of the UK, it was clear that action was required.

Using the key findings from Economic Impact Assessment as a robust evidence base, a Sustainable Recovery Plan was developed. The Sustainable Recovery Plan suggested actions and interventions targeted at where they would have a maximum impact. It was crucial that the recovery plan must be agile and be able to adapt to sudden changes in government response and /or the possibility of local lockdown scenarios. This foresight was to prove crucial with national lockdowns following in November and a further one in January, from which the country is currently emerging from. The actions outlined in the Recovery Plan were aligned to the five strategic themes agreed in 2019; International, Creative, Connected, Talented, Resilient.

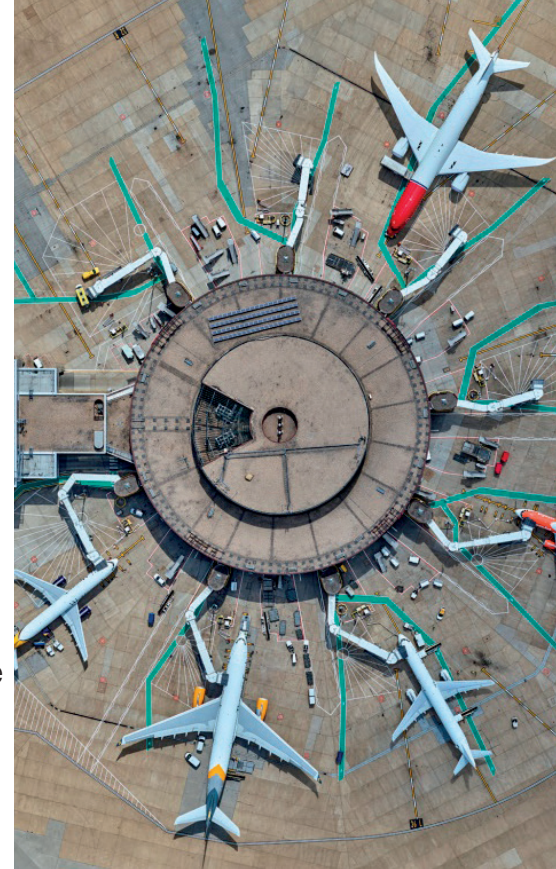
Since the plan was agreed in October, activity has occurred at pace. These are some of the key actions;

## International

- Establish a Global place narrative for the City Region
- Focus on education, arts, retail and green
- Use universities and research hubs to attract domestic and international investment into the region.

## Creative

- Ensure Businesses will continue to be supported to grow by the Business Hot House programme being run by the University of Chichester and C2C's Growth Hub
- Build on success of flexible workspaces within the region such as Platf9rm, Plus X and the Sussex Innovation Centre
- Work with partners such as Visit England, Experience West Sussex and Visit Brighton to support the visitor sector promoting the region for staycation breaks and holidays
- Lobby national government for a Tourism Sector Deal for the region.



# Response to COVID 19 – driving economic recovery

## Connected

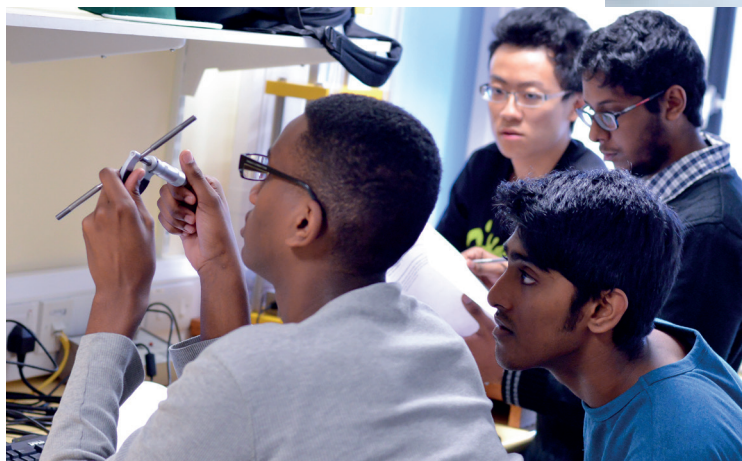
- Expedite the roll-out of full-fibre and use the region as a test-bed for businesses and innovators to develop new ideas
- Continue development of the Greater Brighton Digital Action Plan and stimulate the adoption of digital technologies and skills among non-digital businesses and residents
- Work with the business sector to support local training providers to provide digital skills training required for vacant positions
- Lobby for improvements to the main transport corridors; Brighton Mainline, A27, A259, M23/A23 and A29
- Support public transport providers to encourage users back onto the networks in a safe and socially distanced way.

## Talented

- Provide skills support alongside the phasing-out of the Job Retention Scheme to support the transition into new jobs, particularly in the low carbon/clean tech/circular economy sectors, to catalyse a green recovery
- Focus on groups most impacted by the crisis e.g. young people

## Resilient

- Position Greater Brighton as a region that champions and leads on sustainable growth
- Support the University of Brighton's leading role in the national Clean Growth UK Programme
- Create a Greater Brighton hydrogen hub to accelerate private sector production of green hydrogen
- Support partners to deliver retrofit programmes for homes and buildings at a regional scale, working with leading private and community sector providers
- Support all new housing with green energy and support working from home
- Support C2C's efforts with partners in the public and private sector to create a world-class innovation centre within Crawley.





# Recovery through green growth

## GB10 Pledges

To show commitment to declaring a national climate emergency, Greater Brighton partners took action in the autumn of 2020 by launching its GB10 pledges. These pledges promise to use our combined authority, lobbying power, expertise and knowledge to becoming a carbon neutral region, through championing a major programme of projects on environmental action and clean growth. The Greater Brighton city region pledges to help tackle the climate change crisis and place itself at the centre of partnership efforts to effect real change.



- 1. Kelp (carbon capture)** – A scheme to reintroduce a 10-mile kelp forest off the coast of Sussex could remove 70,000 tonnes of carbon per year from the atmosphere and help prevent coastal erosion.



- 3. Zero emission fleets (low carbon)** – Plans are being developed to replace traditional engines with low carbon vehicles as part of contract renewal, to improve air quality, cut noisy engines, and reduce carbon emissions. Greater Brighton pledges to bring fresh impetus into this process so that 50 per cent of all Greater Brighton vehicles are low carbon by 2025.



- 2. Water recycling (water preservation)** – Local water resources are finite and recycling water to new homes in the Northern Arc development in Burgess Hill will save significantly on the amount needed to be taken from already stressed chalk aquifers underground.



- 4. EV charging points (infrastructure network)** – We are working to establish a network of Electric Vehicle charging points so that every resident in the region is within a convenient distance from an energy source for their electric vehicle by 2030.



**5. Rewilding (water erosion)** – There is rewilding activity across the region, such as Wildflower Lewes and Where the Wild Flowers Grow in Worthing projects, and the University of Sussex is working on research on rewilding and rain garden projects. By allowing landscapes to develop naturally encourages biodiversity and makes them more resilient to changing climate.



**8. Public Buildings (solar)** - Members are committed to reducing our reliance on fossil fuels by decreasing our energy use in public buildings 50% by 2030 by installing efficiency refits and solar panels.



**6. Integrated home visits (efficiency)** – A one-stop visit by experts is an effective way of helping to reduce water consumption and improve energy efficiency, cutting bills and helping the environment.



**9. Innovation (research & innovation)** – A Greater Brighton Innovation Forum to drive forward local project delivery, build partnerships and aid local capacity building and learning has been set up.



**7. Low Carbon Heating (low carbon)** – Decarbonisation of the housing stock is a firm priority - heating is responsible for 40% of Greater Brighton's carbon emissions and on average 55% of home energy costs.



**10. Lobby** - Greater Brighton pledges to press central government to increase water and energy efficiency standards for new and existing buildings to reduce bills, cut carbon emissions and increase climate resilience.



# Recovery through green growth

## Recovery through our Energy and Water Plans

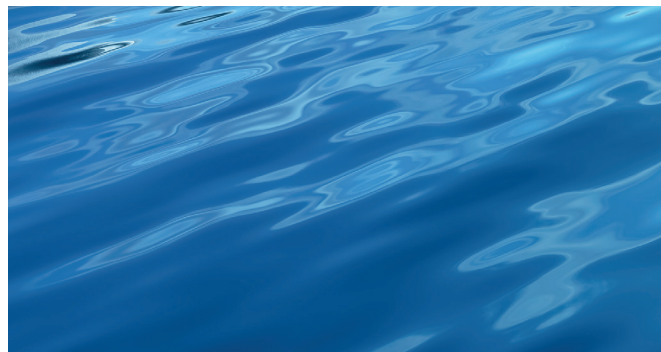
To 'grow back greener' after lockdown, the projects and ambitions in both the Energy and Water plans will support Greater Brighton to do that.

### Energy Plan

Participants in the Greater Brighton Energy Plan have over 30 investible energy projects under way. These projects will reduce energy demand, cut carbon emissions, and bring community benefits, and also contribute to a resilient energy system for the future. Some projects innovate with novel technologies and new ways of integrating energy systems, other projects seek to scale up and coordinate well-known interventions.



### Water Plan



Greater Brighton is partnering Southern Water to begin a pilot project which will introduce recycled water to 3,500 homes (in toilet cisterns and, possibly, garden hose supplies) on a new estate at Northern Arc, Burgess Hill. The water will be to an acceptable standard but not drinking quality. This will keep more than 60 million litres in the environment every year and mean cheaper bills for residents. Longer-term, we hope the proof-of-concept from the Northern Arc development will mean this approach can become embedded across Greater Brighton through local plans.

Greater Brighton will continue to support Southern Water in delivering up to 50,000 water efficiency home visits once lockdown is lifted. At least 10 per cent of these, or one pilot project per local authority will be the subject of combined visits to examine energy efficiency as well. It is estimated householders could save up to £78 a year on bills this way.

### Hydrogen Sussex



Born out of the Greater Brighton Energy Plan, Hydrogen Sussex launched in February 2021, and puts the region at the forefront of a hydrogen fuel revolution. The group is made up of Local authorities, businesses, and organisations from across the region and beyond, including a world leading engineering firm, airports, ports, a bus company, utilities companies, Coast-to-Capital LEP, and the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS).

By pooling expertise and lobbying power Hydrogen Sussex aims to position the clean fuel as a mainstream energy carrier to help the drive to become a zero carbon economy.

The bid to encourage the development of hydrogen comes as one of the group's members, Shoreham Port, announces it has begun work on an ambitious new partnership with H2evolution to create a green hydrogen hub. A planning application will shortly be developed to establish a 20-megawatt electrolysis plant to the south of the Port's famous lock gates.

# Upgrading our infrastructure for a post-COVID world

## Digital

The Covid-19 pandemic has shifted, possibly permanently, the way we do things, including the way we work and the way we purchase goods and services. This has increased the need for ultrafast (full-fibre) digital connectivity and next-generation digital services.

In January 2020, the Board approved an ambitious Digital Action Plan for Greater Brighton which identified that the Digital arena cuts across 11 thematic areas including, Business, the Internet of Things, Retail, Visitors and Transport. The existence of the West Sussex Gigabit Programme, a strong cluster of creative digital businesses, the 5G Testbed and funding secured to establish a 5G ring, provide a strong platform on which to move forwards.

The need identified was to accelerate the creation of services that will allow businesses and residents to maximise the opportunities that ultrafast fibre enables. As we look to regrow and rebuild following Covid-19, the importance of this has been further elevated. There exists a huge opportunity for sectors such as retail, hospitality and the visitor economy to use the new technologies to develop products, services and experiences relevant to a post-covid economy.

The Digital Action Plan has been reviewed and refreshed in light of the Covid pandemic, and the exciting and essential work will continue at pace during 2021.



## Transport

During the Covid-19 pandemic there has been an upsurge in active travel across the region. Following Government advice in the first lockdown last spring, people have sought to avoid public transport and at the same time try and get exercise whilst there was limited or no access to gyms, pools and other sports activities.

The Greater Brighton local authorities were quick to respond, by creating new cycle lanes and other designated safe spaces for cyclists and walkers. In late 2020 Brighton & City Council secured £2.37m for improvements to walking and cycling in the city from the Active Travel Fund (previously Emergency Active Travel Fund). Five schemes have been proposed, and public consultations will run through February and March. The latest award followed an award of around £660k from Tranche 1 of the fund. In November 2020 a recommendation was made to extend the successful BTN Bikeshare scheme beyond the boundary of Brighton & Hove City Council along the coast to Adur and Worthing.

The Greater Brighton Economic Board is committed to public transport as being an efficient and environmentally friendly way of residents moving around the City Region and beyond. The Board will support public transport providers to encourage users back onto the networks in a safe and socially distanced way as we emerge from the current lockdown.

The priorities corridors for the region remain Brighton Mainline, M23/A23, A27, A259 and A26. Greater Brighton is represented on the Transport for the South East (TfSE) South Central Radial Area Study Forum, which is an opportunity to make clear to TfSE and other regional stakeholders the challenges, priorities and opportunities for transport within the Greater Brighton region.



# Vision statement

A growing, **modern economy** that is **international, creative, connected, talented** and **resilient**

## Our aspirations



### International

Attracting inward investment through Business Managers scanning for potential opportunities and promoting region

Open for Business – forging new connections with business post Brexit

Being ready to prepare a bid for announcement of a High Potential Opportunity (HPO.)

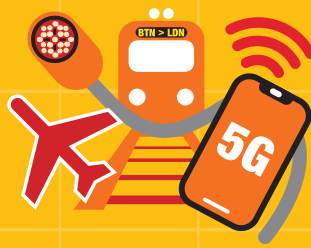


### Creative

Continue to support university led growth and recovery programmes including the Business Hot House

Seek new opportunities for business growth projects in tourism and creative industries to transform the pace of growth in these sectors

Develop Innovation Ecosystem for the region as a catalyst for growth.



### Connected

Delivering on the Greater Brighton Digital Action Plan including piloting the Citizens WIFI rollout and expanding across region

Continue at pace to deliver full fibre broadband throughout the region

Lobby Network Rail to progress improvement plans to the Brighton Mainline

Lobby for improvements to other crucial road and rail infrastructure through Transport for the South East.



### Talented

Work together to share ideas and best practice on the decarbonisation of council homes across Greater Brighton and maximise opportunity to shape education, training and the supply chain development in this area

Develop a Skills Needs Analysis for the region and bring partners together to develop a Skills Strategy that meets the changing need across sectors

Workforce development.



### Resilient

Support partners to deliver decarbonisation retrofit programmes for homes and buildings at a regional scale

Following the GB10 pledges, work closer with the One Public Estate partners to determine how to maximise the opportunity for sustainable redevelopment

Rapidly progress work to establish Greater Brighton as a hydrogen hub.



# Remarks from the Chairman

It's been an unprecedented 12 months for everyone of the 1.1 million people living in the City Region.

The COVID pandemic has brought huge challenges to all of our residents, forced many businesses to adapt to new ways of working overnight and placed massive demands on our public services.

But despite all of this, the resilience shown by our City Region has been hugely impressive.

The collective spirit, the flexibility, the innovation - all have been apparent as residents, businesses and other stakeholders have worked together to help us emerge from this unprecedented period.

While I know it's not been easy for everyone, I have been heartened by the way that businesses in particular have adapted and pivoted to keep going, some of which we have featured on our communication channels in the past 12 months.

In order for the City Region to truly meet its potential though there is more that we can do.

As Greater Brighton leaders in the fields of government, business and academia, it is only

right that our response to COVID remains the number one priority.

We will work together creatively to make Greater Brighton a region that the government wants to work with and invest in.

We will also continue pushing forward strong attractive pitches for investment to unlock key strategic growth sites and develop new technology.

We will also work closely with MPs and other bodies to ensure our voice is heard, never more important at a time in which the Government's 'levelling up' programme sees more funding heading north.

While we remain focussed on supporting key sectors and areas to bounce back from the pandemic, we must also look to the future, thinking about what Greater Brighton needs in five, ten, 25 years from now to grow and thrive.

A central strand will be inward investment and selling Greater Brighton as a place where people and businesses want to be based.

We will be stepping up this work, capitalising on the first-class transport links we have, our proximity to London, excellent education

establishments and stunning coastal and countryside setting.

I also am pleased to say that I - along with other Greater Brighton members - remain committed to the GB10 pledges, which have the potential to transform our environment for generations to come.

Hydrogen power, coastal kelp beds and zero-emission fleets are not just things for the future, they are being created now - which is down to the work that we're doing collectively.

By continuing to work together, we can make sure that Greater Brighton bounces back stronger in years to come.



**Daniel Humphreys**  
Leader of Worthing Borough Council



Links and Resources  
**[www.greaterbrighton.com](http://www.greaterbrighton.com)**